Education
January 18, 2008

Apprenticeship Information Sessions Go Province-Wide

Beginning Tuesday, January 22, the Department of Education will offer the first of nine apprenticeship information sessions that will provide valuable information to potential students, employers, and anyone with an interest in the skilled trades in this province.

"A career in the skilled trades offers enormous opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in light of potential upcoming mega-projects," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education. "We need to get this information out there so both students and employers understand what's required for apprenticeship training and the huge benefits to be gained by hiring apprentices."

In December 2006, the Department of Education hosted the conference, *Apprenticeship: Building on our Foundation*. The conference brought together representatives from education, business and industry to discuss issues related to program delivery, the promotion of apprentices, the streamlining of apprenticeship programs, and the strengthening of mentorship opportunities. One of the recommendations stemming from this conference was to conduct province-wide information sessions.

These sessions will present an overview of the apprenticeship system, outline Provincial Government initiatives designed to promote and support apprenticeship training, and provide a venue for questions and answers from interested parties.

"Responding to provincial skills shortages and providing skilled workers to meet labour market needs will require the concerted efforts of all partners," said Minister Burke. "Provincial Government funding has doubled the number of seats in skilled trades programming at College of the North Atlantic and private training institutions have also increased their numbers. We also need employers willing to commit so apprentices can continue to advance in their training to reach journeyperson status. I encourage anyone with an interest or willingness to make an investment in apprenticeship to attend these informative sessions."

Information sessions are scheduled for the following locations:

- January 22 – Greenwood Inn and Suites, Corner Brook
- January 23 – Hotel Gander, Gander
- January 24 – Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor
- February 12 – Carol Inn, Labrador City
- February 14 – Hotel North, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- February 26 – Haven Inn, St. Anthony
- February 28 – Holiday Inn, Stephenville
- March 4 – St. Jude Hotel, Clarenville
- March 6 – Ramada Hotel, St. John's
- March 11 – Marystown Hotel, Marystown

Two sessions will be held each day (2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.). There is no need to register. For more information, call 1-877-771-3737, 709-729-2729, or e-mail app@gov.nl.ca

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BACKGROUNDER

Over the past two years, the Williams Government has allocated $43.6 million in the areas of apprenticeship, science and technology, programming, training and infrastructure. Some of the initiatives funded include:

- $1.5 million in 2007/08 for the *Futures in Skilled Trades and Technology* program in high school – an initiative that will see eight new skilled trades courses developed. This is year two of the pilot which is being offered in 37 schools;
- Commissioned the Skills Task Force and accepted 50 recommendations from their report, *All the Skills to Succeed:*
- $1 million for the creation of the School of Ocean Technology at the Marine Institute;
- $1.5 million in 2006 to expand skilled trades programming at College of the North Atlantic (CNA);
- $1 million for two new oil and gas programs at CNA;
- $1 million for a shop modernization program at CNA;
- $1 million for a program development unit at CNA to ensure quality programs that are current and responsive to labour market needs;
- Doubled capacity to offer industrial trades at CNA in the past three years;
- Signed an agreement with the Government of Alberta to allow apprentices earn credit for work in Alberta and return home to complete in-school training;
- To help apprentices acquire the work experience needed to complete their programs, the Provincial Government has allocated more than $2.3 million over the past two years, specifically for hiring apprentices. This has created opportunities for 60 individual apprentices since 2006; and,
- Committed to develop a provincial youth apprenticeship model that includes a system for post-secondary credit and scholarships.

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